

2005 Developmental Disabilities Council Projects

The DD Council provided funding for the following projects:

1. Junior Partners in Policy Making Program: This novel program, conducted by the Center for Disabilities Studies at the University of Delaware, was modeled after the adult Partners in Policy Making Program. Students with and without disabilities participated for one week at the University of Delaware and learned advocacy skills that will help them both now and in adulthood.

2. Delaware New Scripts: This program with the Delaware Early Childhood Center trains parents of children with disabilities to tell their stories in the State's college classrooms of education, nursing and social work majors and in professional trainings of social service professionals. The purpose is to explain what it is like to be the parent of a child with a disability. Parents describe the joys, sorrows, problems and frustrations they deal with on a daily basis so the students develop an understanding of and empathy for those parents before they begin working in their field.

3. NAMI-DE Grant Writer: By means of this project the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill in Delaware (NAMI-DE) is able to hire a part-time grant writer to apply for a grant for the Visions for Tomorrow Program. That program provides education and advocacy training for the care-givers of children and adolescents experiencing developmental delays and arrest due to cognitive impairments resulting from the symptoms of mental illness, which is a brain disorder.

4. Inclusion Conference: This annual conference is collaboration with the Department of Education; the Delaware Assistive technology initiative and several other organizations. Its purpose is to train General Education and Special Education teachers plus School Administrators on the latest practices from across the country on the inclusion of children with disabilities into the regular classroom. It highlights how, not only the children with disabilities benefit from inclusion, but all students involved in an inclusive classroom benefit.

5. LIFE Conference: This annual conference is the largest disabilities related conference in the State. It is held in January each year at the Dover Sheraton. This multi-agency collaboration, each year, conducts twelve workshops in four main tracks involving disabilities issues. The tracks are Legislation, Independence through Assistive Technology, Family and Education. Annually over 500 people attend.

6. Disabilities Ball: This novel event is organized by Independent Resources, Inc. It was the first formal ball in Delaware for people with disabilities. People with and without disabilities enjoyed dinner and dancing in a formal atmosphere at the Christiana Hilton.

7. Universal Design for Learning: This project is directed by the University of Delaware's Assistive Technology Initiative. It trains Delaware's educators on how to design a classroom and use available computer and other assistive technology to ensure that students with different learning styles and capabilities can be successful in the classroom.

8. Physicians Awareness "First Signs" Project: This project is with the Autism Society of Delaware in-conjunction-with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Division of Public Health. Its purpose is to train the State's Family Practice Doctor's and pediatricians on how to recognize warning signs for Autism and other Developmental Disabilities at a very early age in order to make referrals for treatment much earlier than is now usually the practice. It has been demonstrated, with children with Autism and other Developmental Disabilities, that the earlier treatment begins, the better the outcomes are later in the child's life.

9. Assistive Technology in the Workplace: This project is with the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative in-conjunction-with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Its purpose is to train employers, people with disabilities and family members on the latest assistive technology available that enables people with disabilities to become productive employees at various job sites.

10. Job Survival Skills Training: This project with The Arc of Delaware trains their clients who are employed at MBNA on job socialization skills to help them remain employed. Additionally, The Arc staff works closely with managers at MBNA to quickly correct any problems that may cause a client to lose employment.

11. Money Follows the Person Study: This project is with the State Council for Persons with Disabilities. They have subcontracted with an agency to conduct a study on what needs to be done in Delaware to implement "Money Follows the Person". That initiative involves taking Medicaid money that normally would go to an institution to support a person and moving that money into the community to support that person if he/she chooses to move into the community. The key elements of the study is determining what services are available in the community and what services are still needed in order for "Money Follows the Person" to be successful in Delaware.

12. On My Own Workshops: This project is being administered by Independent Resources, Inc. The purpose is to provide training for people currently in institutions who have decided to move into the community. The training cover everything the person needs to know in order to begin a new life in the community. In addition to proving some funding to help the person get started, for example paying required deposits, follow up is provided to those who completed the workshops to ensure they are being successful.

13. First Steps Booklet: This project is administered by the University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies. Its' purpose is to provide useful information to people new to the disabilities experience or new to Delaware. It will provide information on what steps to take first in order to start receiving services. Helpful tips such as: what information you will need to have available before making a call; where you should call; what questions you should ask and why you should ask them will be included.

14. Partners In Policy Graduate Weekends: This initiative with the University of Delaware's Center for Disabilities Studies consisted of three weekends where graduates met and decided how they wanted to organize to be more effective advocates for themselves, their children and people with disabilities in general. They decided to organize into three separate groups. One will develop an e-mail list serve of graduates to better coordinate important disabilities issues and needs. The second group will develop a Partners Graduate Web-site with current disabilities information of interest to the graduates. The third will develop a Mentor Program where graduates will mentor both new Partners students and past graduates.

15. Delaware People First Trip: Annually, the Council sponsors a self-advocacy organization. This year we sponsored Delaware People First, a self-advocacy organization affiliated with The Arc of Delaware to take an educational trip to the historical sites in Philadelphia. The purpose was to teach those who went about how our rights as Americans came about and how those rights pertain to Americans with disabilities.

16. Beyond Stress for Teens: This program directed by the Mental Health Association in Delaware, focused on at-risk teens currently in facilities such as Ferris School, The Stevenson House and the Juvenile Detention Center. They were provided information on how to obtain resources to alleviate stress that, previously, caused them problems. Additionally, they were provided information on other resources available to help them not be repeat offenders.